



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA GEARS UP TO COUNT CATTLE INVENTORY

Boise, Idaho, December 11, 2006 –The U.S. Department of Agriculture is gearing up to count cattle inventory nationwide, with plans to contact nearly 50,000 U.S. cattle operations during the first two weeks in January.

“The January Cattle Survey is one of the largest and most important surveys we conduct each year,” said Bill Meyer, director of the Idaho Field Office of USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). “In Idaho alone, we’ll be contacting about 1,200 operations in order to measure trends in beef and dairy cattle inventories, calf crop and cattle operations.”

Producers selected for the survey will have the option of responding via telephone, mail or personal interview with a local NASS representative.

“No matter how they chose to respond, they are providing an important service to the cattle industry and to U.S. agriculture as a whole,” Meyer said. “Their responses will be compiled with those of their fellow producers nationwide, providing the only accurate and comprehensive estimate of the state of U.S. cattle production.”

The information is a critical decision-making tool for the cattle industry, he explained.

“For instance, it helps producers make informed marketing decisions and plan for herd expansion or reduction. It also helps packers and government evaluate expected slaughter volume for future months and determine potential supplies for export,” Meyer said. “In addition, having quality information helps the industry and USDA to be more responsive to the American and international public and to increase consumer understanding and awareness of safety and health benefits of U.S. beef.”

As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law. NASS safeguards the confidentiality of all survey responses and publishes only state- and national-level data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

NASS will publish survey results in the biannual *Cattle* report, scheduled for release on Feb. 2, 2007. The report will provide state- and national-level estimates of total inventory, beef cows, milk cows, bulls, replacement heifers, other heifers, steers, calves, and number of calves born during the previous year. In addition, NASS’s *Farms, Land in Farms, and Livestock Operations* report, also set for publication Feb. 2, will include data on the number of operations with cattle and calves, and percent of inventory by herd size. These reports will be available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

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